



## **Clean Water Indiana 2021 SWCD-Led Competitive Grants Guidance**

**Executive Summary:** The Clean Water Indiana (CWI) Grant Program (IC 14-32-8-5) utilizes the Clean Water Indiana Fund to Support Indiana Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) in efforts to improve water quality by reducing sediment and nutrients from nonpoint sources. The State Soil Conservation Board (SSCB) is accepting competitive proposals for targeted projects up to three years in length.

**Application Process:** The link to the online application is available on the Clean Water Indiana Page of the ISDA website. (<http://www.in.gov/isda/3441.htm>) Applications are completely online and can be updated in your browser. Applications will be submitted via a web portal that is forthcoming. Districts should complete the online application and may attach zero (0) to three (3) additional 8.5x11 pages if desired. Attachments will be accepted in word document or pdf format and are limited to 3 pages total. For example a district could submit 1 document of no more than 3 pages or up to 3 single page documents. Attachments should provide material support and clarity for the application narrative for the proposal but will not be scored on their own.

All applications will be scored and ranked alongside the non SWCD led proposals for CWI funding consideration. The CWI grants committee's funding recommendations for both SWCD-led and Non-SWCD led projects will be presented to the full SSCB at the October SSCB meeting.

**Application Deadline:** The application must be submitted by **September 11, 2020 at 4 pm EDT**. By submitting the application, the lead SWCD certifies that each partnering district has agreed to the terms outlined in the application.

**Eligible Applicants:** Applications can be submitted by any SWCD in the State of Indiana. However, only one application is permitted per project and must be submitted by the lead SWCD. SWCDs may be lead on only one application in the 2021 grant cycle. Lead districts must be up to date on all CWI reporting.

**Ineligible Projects:** The 2021 CWI grant program cannot be used to fund research equipment. Conservation practices and lab analysis of soil and water that are components of research projects are eligible. Projects relating to urban practices that will reduce sediment and nutrient are eligible. Cost-sharing is also not allowed on specific practices that an entity is required to install to comply with a state or local rule or ordinance. *Example: CWI funds cannot be used to meet MS4 requirements unless the proposed use of funds goes above and beyond the requirement outlined in the MS4 permit's Storm Water Quality Management Plan.*

**Proposal Logistics:** This grant opportunity is competitive. Proposals can be for any amount that would accomplish the project described. A lead district must be selected to serve as the grantee to receive and administer the grant. However grant funds can be shared between districts through cooperative agreements locally. The grant proposal must document how the grant funds will address at least two of the State priority resource concerns referenced in the State Soil Conservation Board's (SSCB's) Business Plan adopted in 2020. Proposals that outline how CWI funds will leverage additional funding from other sources as well as engage other partners are strongly encouraged. CWI project proposals that will be in tandem with ongoing projects are encouraged. *Example: CWI funds might be used to add technical assistance to help implement sediment and nutrient reduction practices cost-shared through a LARE or 319 project.*

**Project Dates:** All 2021 Clean Water Indiana Grant projects shall take no longer than three full years to complete. Projects will start on January 1, 2021 and must be finished and all funds spent by December 31, 2023.

**Project Description:** The proposal must identify the current nonpoint source water quality concern(s) in the selected district(s). The proposal must also identify how addressing this resource concern pertains to both the SWCD business plan(s) and the SSCB business plan.

**Partnerships:** Each application must state clearly what each partner and participating district will be contributing to the proposed project (i.e. outreach, professional assistance, estimated funds, etc.) Partnering districts and organizations must be identified with a point of contact for the project, their contact information, and an explanation of any anticipated cash or in kind match from the partner.

**Conservation Practices:** Conservation practices and structural measures shall follow NRCS Field Office Technical Guide where applicable. New technologies not currently in the technical guide may be implemented if reviewed and concurred in by a technical representative of the Conservation Implementation Teams (CIT) or their designee. *Please note that pollinator plantings must be free of species that are noxious, invasive, and/or all amaranth. To verify that seed mixes are free of these species, a district MUST request the seed lab card from the distributor. For more information, please contact your DSS.* For cost-share practices, CWI funds may be used to pay up to a maximum of 75% of the total conservation practice cost. At least 25% of the cost must be provided by the landowner/producer as match. However, cover crop cost share is limited to a maximum of \$20/acre. If applying for cost share, please describe the process you will implement to select grant recipients. Priority will be given to SWCDs who demonstrate a strategic process for managing cost share dollars and prioritizing first-time users.

**Funding Restrictions:** Proposals must fall within the funding context allowed under the Clean Water Indiana Law (IC 14-32-8). The law prohibits funds to be used for food, food related paper products, office equipment or district self-promotional materials (i.e. mugs, t-shirts, pens, etc.)

**Match Requirements:** A 50 percent cash and/or in-kind match is required. Match contributions can be federal, state, and/or local sources including such things as landowner costs, staff time, supervisor time, equipment use, purchase, rental, etc. Proposals that request funds for staffing require a 25% cash or in-kind match for the staffing component. *Example: District A submits a \$10,000 for solely a staff position. District A's proposal requires a match of \$2,500. District B submits a \$10,000 proposal that includes \$5,000 for staff and \$5,000 for cost share. Proposal B is required to have \$3,750 match.* The match is applicable only if directly related to the purpose of the proposed project. The grants committee may give preference to cash match rather than in kind during the scoring process. Grant proposals must use the match standards outlined below to develop their project budget.

**Match Standards:** (all figures are per hour of project work)  
ICP Staff/SWCD supervisors (including associates) \$25\*  
Landowner Time: \$25  
Professional Services: \$25  
Student/Intern/Volunteer: \$10

\*ICP match rates were calculated from publicly available data in Gateway and public transparency portals.

Any landowner contribution toward the remaining portion of cost share practices should be counted as cash match.

In general, time spent working on the project should be considered in-kind match; whereas money would be considered cash match.

**Leveraging Funds:** SWCDs are encouraged to partner with traditional and non-traditional organizations/agencies at the local, state, and federal level to leverage additional funds for their project/initiative. Projects which add to the percent cost-share/incentive rate offered through another program are prohibited. *Example: A project where CWI funds are used for cost share and 319 funds for technical assistance are acceptable. A project where CWI and 319 funds are both used to give producers a larger cost share amount is prohibited.*

**Scoring Procedures:** The SSCB will utilize a scoring sheet to aid in ranking the proposals. The SSCB may use discretion when awarding grant funds.

**Process of Payments:** Once the proposal is approved by the SSCB, the Indiana State Department of Agriculture (ISDA) will issue an electronic contract to the designated lead SWCD. SWCDs should return their electronically signed contract to ISDA within 30 days of receipt in order to receive their funds. Funds must be utilized in a timely manner. Districts will receive 50 percent of their grant funding up front and the remaining 50 percent as reimbursement to the lead district. *Please note that reimbursement claims may be made no more frequently than quarterly and require updated SharePoint financial reporting, conservation project tracking (if applicable), a claim voucher and a Quickbooks or similar financial report showing that requested funds have been paid by the SWCD(s).*

**Reporting Requirements:** Financial and project status reports will be required for the duration of the grant and a final report will be due at the end of the grant. The grant reporting forms will be provided. This report must be completed semi-annually (every 6 months) and summarize the outcomes and achievements of the project. These reports will be due 30 days following the anniversary date of the grant and are cumulative. *Example: grants that begin on January 1<sup>st</sup> will have reports due January 31<sup>st</sup> and July 31<sup>st</sup>.* The first report will be due on July 31<sup>st</sup>, 2021. Tracking of conservation practice implementation (following FOTG standards) must be reported through SharePoint's conservation tracking system on a (minimum) quarterly basis.

**Grant Reviews:** ISDA routinely visits with its grantees to ensure projects and grants are proceeding as intended and offer guidance and support if needed. Each year, ISDA will strategically select grants to review. These reviews can include open grants and grants that have been completed in the last three years. Upon completion of a review, ISDA will send a summary of results to all districts involved in the project and their board(s). If found during formal review or routine reporting checks, failure to make progress on the project or report progress as specified in the grant agreement will be noted in a project's file and may jeopardize a district's ability to receive competitive grant funds in future cycles.

### **Questions:**

For assistance please contact your District Support Specialist (DSS).

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**Deadlines that SWCDs must meet to be eligible to be lead on an application for CWI 2021:**

- Election Committee Report: November 1, 2019
- Recommendation for Supervisor Appointment: November 1, 2019
- Nominee for Election: December 1, 2019
- Annual Meeting Held: March 31, 2020
- Election held at Annual Meeting: March 31, 2020
- Annual Financial Report and Audit Form/Page 2 of AFR: March 31, 2020
- Certification of Election of Supervisors: Within 7 days of election

*The items are not specified in district law but are considered essential for district operations and will be considered for CWI 2020. These questions will appear as a self-assessment on the CWI application.*

- District Annual Meeting Information: January 1, 2020
- Updated SharePoint Directories: Within 30 days of changes
- The district has a current business plan.
- The district has had at least one current supervisor/staff/active associate attend a Leadership Institute workshop session since 2008. *\*Note that in order for an associate supervisor to count toward this item, they must be listed in the SharePoint directory.*
- The district has at least one current supervisor/staff/active associate graduate of the Leadership Institute program. *\*Note that in order for an associate supervisor to count toward this item, they must be listed in the SharePoint directory.*
- District Staff or supervisors participated in the fall/winter 2019 cover crop transects.
- District has applied for a grant other than CWI in the last 3 years and how many.